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# SPOTS and STRIPES

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PHOTO BY DONNA K. GROSVENOR



REWATI —

*The White Tiger Cub*

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## A TIGER IN THE HOUSE

Having a baby tiger in the house has a great deal of similarity to having a human infant in the house. They arrive without much advance warning; there are formulas to prepare, schedules with 2 a.m. feedings, bottles to sterilize and extra laundry to do. On the brighter side are the first tooth, the first step, bath time, picture taking, admiring visitors and the tremendous satisfaction and awe of watching a tiny baby grow and develop.

Rewati, named by the Ambassador of India for a pure stream in his country, made her first unexpected arrival at the Lion House early Sunday morning, April 13.\* On hearing the good news, my husband, Director Theodore H. Reed, our daughter Mary Alyce and I dashed for the zoo. There on the floor of Mohini's cage was a tiny furry black and white bundle crying lustily. Mohini, the beautiful white tigress from Rewa, India, was pacing the cage and giving her cub occasional licks and smells. While zoo personnel busily conferred over what to do next, the tiny cub wiggled and rolled until she finally came out under the bars of the cage enabling Bert Barker, head keeper of carnivores, to pick her up. While the men fixed a nest box in the retiring cage, I held the baby tigress close giving her as much warmth as possible. Soon she was safely back with Mohini and nursing to everyone's immense relief.

The second unexpected arrival was to our home in Montgomery County, Maryland, on April 21. I was in the midst of preparations for serving a buffet supper to sixteen people before the Friends of the National Zoo lecture that night when my husband phoned. After solicitously inquiring how things were coming along for the supper, he asked, "Do you want the white cub now or later?" Forgetting that he hates having a question answered with another question, I asked, "What happened?" Apparently Mohini had become upset over the romantic talk between Romana, the cub's father, and another tigress and had carried

the cub around haphazardly and licked her excessively. Becoming alarmed over her safety, Don Bridgwater, head of the department of living vertebrates, ordered her separation from Mohini. So, being the wife of the director, I was to have the rare privilege of raising a white tiger cub.

As I hurriedly put together the main dish for that evening, I mentally wrestled with the first question—where to put the baby. Our son Mark was away at college so his room seemed the logical choice for a nursery. Shortly Ted, Mr. Bridgwater and Mr. Barker arrived with Rewati, a premature baby incubator, cans of Orphalac (a milk formula for baby animals) and Even-flo bottles. The cub was limp from exhaustion and my first attempts to feed her were unsuccessful. She weighed two pounds and nine ounces and one blue eye was just opening.

Soon the incubator was sitting on top of Mark's desk and the tiny tiger was sleeping soundly with the temperature at 75° F. She slept for seven hours, through admiring visits and encouraging comments from our guests, through supper and good-byes. Finally late in the evening she took an ounce of formula and I felt I was safely through the first crisis.

We settled down to a schedule of eating about every three and one-half hours around the clock. The first couple of days she slept almost constantly between feedings. Then as she started to have waking periods during which she crawled and rolled around, it was obvious that the incubator was getting too confining for her. The zoo carpenter built a plywood box two and one-half feet wide, four feet long and eighteen inches high which we placed on Mark's bed. A heating pad in one corner, on low setting, covered by a towel, provided a warm spot. This was used first as a playpen but within a few days it replaced the incubator completely.

By the tenth day both eyes were open. On the eleventh day the first tooth had broken through the gums. She now weighed three and one-half pounds. To increase the food value of the formula, Initol, an animal milk supplement, was substituted for half of the Orphalac. On the seventeenth day Gerber's strained beef for babies was added to the formula, one-

\*Hamlet, Billie, "This is only the beginning," Spots and Stripes, Vol. 6, No. 1:2-3, (Spring, 1969).

*One of the daytime feedings.*



PHOTO BY DONNA K. GROSVENOR

fourth teaspoon to every two ounces of milk. I also rubbed the meat on her tongue and she was soon licking it from my fingers. At three weeks and five pounds Gerber's mixed cereal for babies was added to the formula, one teaspoon to each two ounces. She also received vitamin drops daily and Clinton Gray, zoo veterinarian, had started serum injections to protect her from feline enteritis. During her third week she slept through the night without a feeding.

Although she was progressing beautifully with her eating and growing, a problem had

appeared. She had started to walk at two weeks but her gait was very uneven and she tended to circle and to hold her head in a twisted position. Next we learned that she could not see; but since no one was certain at what age a tiger's eyes started to function, we were hopeful this was normal.

During her fourth week, following a violent spell of circling, she became listless, weak and ceased walking altogether. Massive shots of penicillin, inhalation of pure oxygen and the addition of an egg and two teaspoons of brandy to each eight ounces of her formula

(the aroma was reminiscent of Christmas eggnog!) were commenced and she was placed outside in the sun for several hours each day. Soon she was walking again—another crisis passed.

The addition of the backyard to Rewati's domain (nicely fenced by Robert Ogilvie and men from the maintenance and construction department) marked the beginning of the real fun of having a tiger around. I spent many pleasant hours watching her play with leaves and branches, pad through the grass and sneak behind bushes only to come charging out again within a moment. She loved being handled and played with as long as you did not pick her up. She especially liked a bath and a wash-cloth or sponge was a good substitute for Mohini's tongue. She had a few toys—a big red plastic ball which she eventually chased when she commenced to see, a couple of dog bones and Ted's old leather slippers. The latter were her favorite and provided her with long sessions of pouncing, chewing and wrestling.

At five weeks and seven and one-half pounds she started to eat solid food from a bowl—a mixture of Gerber's beef and cereal with a little formula. Two weeks later when she weighed  $11\frac{1}{2}$  pounds I started replacing the beef with raw ground horsemeat. As the amount of solid food she ate increased, she

took less formula from the bottle. By this time she had outgrown her box bed in the nursery and now slept in a large pen in the basement.

Like all babies she had her picture taken, and taken and taken some more. Mrs. Gilbert M. Grosvenor came several times a week to record her growth and development for the National Geographic Magazine. Larry Collins, zoologist in the scientific research department, took several reels of colored movies to record her behavior. Ted also took pictures.

As she grew and developed, like all proud parents, we wanted to show her off. So naturally we asked people over to see her. "Come around ten or two or six," we would say; "That's her feeding time and she'll be in the backyard or on the screened porch if the weather is bad." I wish I had kept a guest book or at least a count, of all the people who came to "Oh" and "Ah." The day that 35 people came at one time or another, I realized that we were having almost continual open house. Hectic, but fun.

There was one individual Rewati failed to impress favorably in the two months she lived with us—Ebony, our black cat. At first we feared he looked on the baby tiger as a choice



PHOTO BY DONNA K. GROSSENVOR

snack so we kept the nursery door carefully closed when he was in the house. Then as Rewati grew active and vocal, Ebony decided he wanted nothing to do with her. The first time she actually touched him, he bounded away and madly washed the spot where he had been contaminated.

Rewati's interest in Ebony started my campaign for another tiger to be a playmate for her. Sakhi, a sanskrit word meaning closest friend and companion, arrived from the Cleveland, Ohio, zoo June 10. She was from a litter of three cubs that had been hand raised by the zoo veterinarian's wife. She was almost five weeks old and weighed eight and three-fourths pounds. Rewati at this point was two months old and weighed 14-1/4 pounds. Although their weight difference made it impossible to leave them together all the time, they did spend much time together in the backyard and in Rewati's basement pen during the week I had them both.

Yes, it was nearing time for Rewati to go back to the zoo. She was ceasing to be a cute, cuddly baby kitten and becoming more of a tiger everyday. Although she was not mean, her playful bites could hurt; and when she was picked up for transport from basement to backyard, her claws were something to contend with. I had a few scratches to mark care-

less moments. Getting tiger sitters was commencing to be a problem also. Because of her rarity, I did not leave her alone in the house for long periods. There was no lack of volunteers and during the first weeks when she slept most of the time it was fairly easy to get someone when circumstances demanded my absence. Now, however, the list of people who could cope with her was diminishing. Furthermore, the individual who had helped the most, our daughter Mary Alyce, was leaving on a trip.

The Friends of the National Zoo's annual night at the zoo seemed the perfect time for her return and so plans were made accordingly. For two hours Tuesday evening, June 17, she held court for all who crowded around her special pen to pay her homage. Then back to our home for a final night so that her re-introduction to the Lion House June 18 would take place during the daytime when Mr. Barker and his assistants would be there to oversee her first hours in the cage that had been refurbished especially for her.

Sakhi continued to live with us for another two weeks. Since she was not a rarity like Rewati, I relaxed and enjoyed her more. She missed the white cub and so Ebony became my chief tiger sitter. If he would stay in the backyard, Sakhi was content. I would find them both asleep, the tiger having inched as close to the black cat as she dared—Ebony's claws discouraged her playful overtures and any close contact. Once he left the yard, Sakhi would be at the backdoor, crying to come inside. She followed me everywhere, even up the stairs, and her curiosity brought books tumbling and dishes crashing. In the evening, with a tiger curled up beside me on the couch or floor, the TV programs seemed tame in comparison to reality.

Finally, however, she discovered that curtains were fun to attack and that upholstery was nice for claw sharpening so on July 7 I packed her off to the Zoo also. People keep asking me if I miss "my" tigers around the house. The answer is both "yes" and "no." They are fun when they are little babies; but once the wild animal starts dominating their actions, it's nice to have the National Zoological Park take over.

— Elizabeth C. Reed.

#### *REWATI and SAKHI*

## THE FIRST TEN YEARS ARE THE HARDEST?

The historical date of the first animals at NZP is June 15, 1890. Up until that time, the menagerie was housed at the old Smithsonian building and consisted of 94 mammals, 61 birds, 5 snakes, 3 Galapagos tortoises, 17 alligators, 1 bullfrog and an undisclosed number of water turtles. The logistics of making the move from downtown, some four or five miles, by horse teams and a wagon borrowed from the S.P.C.A., staggers the imagination because in the collection there were six American bison and four American elk and this was in the days prior to the Capchur-gun and tranquilization. All the land that is now NZP was not finally acquired until November 4 of the same year but plans had been laid for building paddocks for the bison and

elk, the old quarry had been prepared for the bears (1 grizzly, 3 blacks and 1 "cinnamon"), and one stone house had been built to house animals requiring heat. Imagine the delight and consternation, after all the plans were made for transporting and housing this small collection, to be on the receiving end of an elephant—for which no plans had been made. A temporary structure suitable for one elephant was hastily constructed only to have the elephant donor, Mr. James E. Cooper, crash through with a second elephant! These elephants, named "Dunk" and "Goldust", were circus animals, docile and tractable, but they ate great quantities of food—another item which had not been anticipated in the budget.

The trials and tribulations of the early Zoo were many. A torrential gullywasher in

*Children and their teacher admire the macaws outside the lion house and . . .*



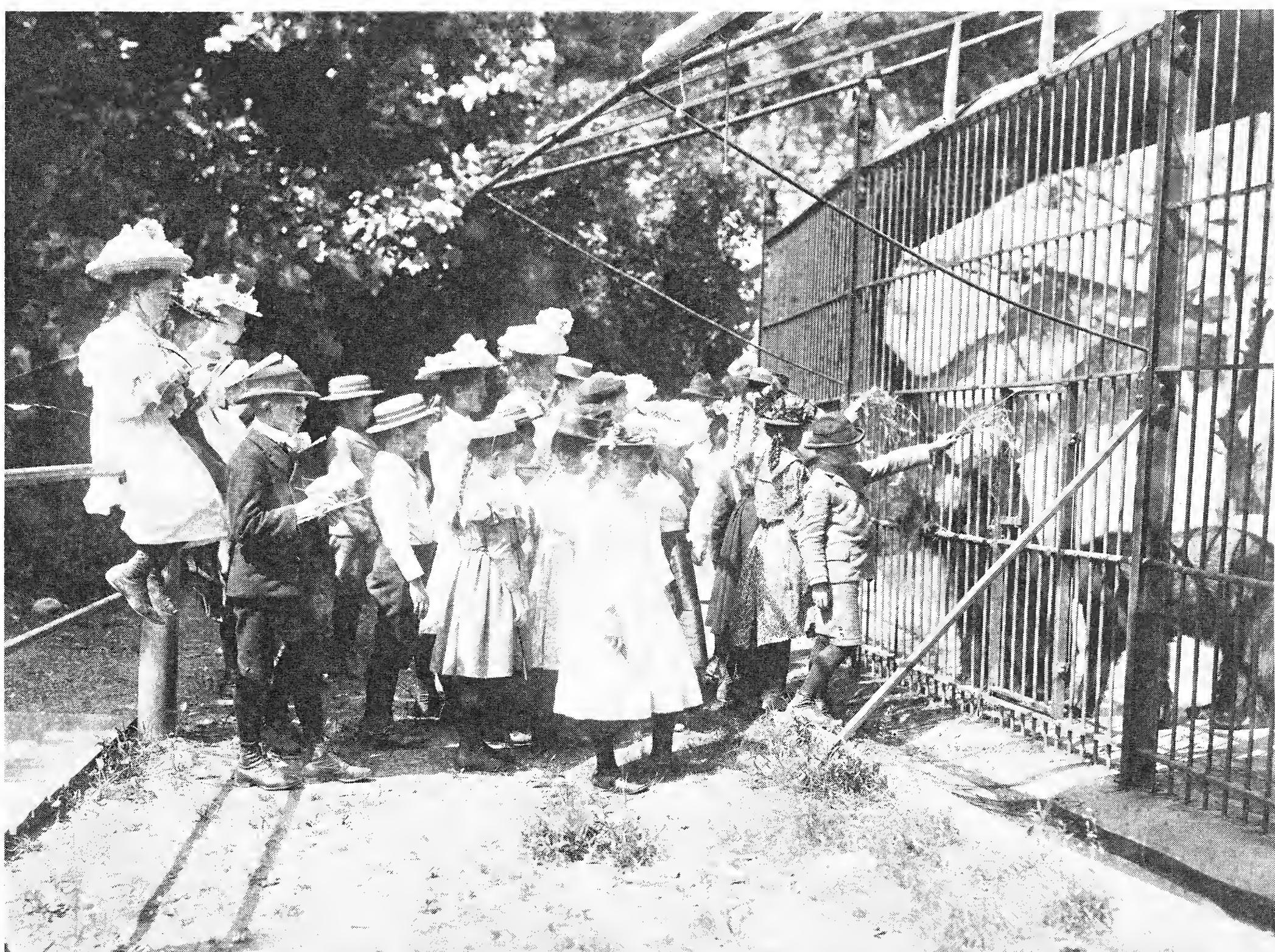
1891 washed away the piers of a new bridge (Rock Creek rose six feet within two hours), earth and rock was washed down into the new bear pits, and a temporary bridge was washed away. To top it off, one of the bears escaped by climbing a nearly perpendicular wall 50 feet high. Attempts at capturing the bear failed and he was shot.

In 1891 the Lion House was built and was called a "large animal house" and everything requiring heat during the winter was placed there. Seven llamas were purchased and a small thatched-roof barn was erected to house them. A tiger and a zebu were loaned to the Zoo as well as two Russian wolfhounds. Troubles still beset the early Zoo for dogs attacked and killed several valuable deer. Losses by death ran high, almost 20%.

*Horrors! Feed the bears!*

One can readily imagine the damper that was put on the enthusiasm of the new Zoo officials when in 1891 Congress revoked the Zoo's privilege of buying animals and for nearly ten years thereafter the Zoo was completely dependent on donations and trades to increase and diversify the collection.

The Adam Forepaugh Circus continued to "winter over" some of its animals and in 1894 a Sumatran rhinoceros, a Nile hippopotamus, white-tailed gnu, waterbuck, blackbuck, camels (both dromedary and bactrian), and five kangaroos added an exotic touch. At the same time, a St. Bernard dog was added to the dog collection and Washingtonians were continuing to add opossums, local snakes, local hawks and owls, as well as white rats and gray squirrels.





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An outbreak of rabies in 1895 in the fox enclosure caused the death of seven animals and a diana monkey died from eating laurel which she snatched from the hands of a visitor. The dog collection grew with the addition of a collie, a pointer and an Eskimo dog. A sea-lion, in the collection less than a year, died from the effects of a dynamite explosion near the pond where she was swimming.

By 1896 there were five lions, 13 American elk, 18 Virginia deer, 25 raccoons, and the dog collection had grown to 24 Eskimo dogs, plus the addition of 2 Chesapeake Bay retrievers, 4 fox terriers, and a stag hound. Four of the Eskimo dogs were a gift from Lt. R. E. Peary, who was later to become Admiral Peary and discover the North Pole.

Regarding the dogs, in 1897, after considerable effort had been made to procure a satisfactory exhibit of the varieties of domestic dogs, Lt. Peary temporarily withdrew two of his Eskimo dogs. Shortly after he returned them to the Zoo, one of them developed a case of distemper which went through the whole dog collection, plus the wolves and foxes. Many animals died but the Eskimo dogs were the hardest hit and the collection was reduced to a single specimen. The dog exhibit continued to create a great deal of public interest and more varieties were donated, such as a French poodle, a Bedlington terrier, a mastiff and a beagle. Even though the visitors enjoyed the exhibit tremendously, the neighbors surrounding the Zoo were dismayed by their constant barking and yapping. In appeasement, the collection was moved to a more distant and secluded section of the Park.

Meanwhile, the beaver family (which was off exhibit) continued to grow and continued

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to chew holes in the wire mesh surrounding their enclosure, felling trees and dragging them to their dams. Even though the holes were constantly being repaired, the beavers managed to escape every night, chewing down small trees, and returning to their homes early in the morning—except for one individual who established himself outside the bounds with his own exhibit. The beavers erected three dams and houses, one dam being four feet high.

A hurricane hit the Zoo in 1896, felling trees and ripping off a portion of Holt House roof. The wind hit a velocity of 80 miles per hour, the roads were blocked with uprooted trees, and fence enclosures were crushed in. Miraculously, not a single animal escaped or was injured.

That same year, NZP was able to acquire two exceedingly rare (now considered extinct) West Indian seals, Monachus tropicalis. At that time, these seals were considered the most important acquisitions ever made by the Zoo.

In 1899, there still being no funds for the purchase of animals, S. P. Langley, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, conceived the idea of interesting officers of the United States who were stationed abroad, in collecting and donating mammals, birds, and reptiles from their areas. Form letters were sent out advising these officers of the fauna available in their areas, how to crate and ship, and general care and feeding. The first response was from Commander Todd, USN, aboard the U.S.S. Wilmington on the Amazon River. He shipped 18 individuals—five kinds of monkeys, an ocelot, a kinkajou, 2 coatimundis, a tapir, a white-lipped peccary, an acouchy, a yellow-thighed caique, a crested curassow and a harpy eagle.

By the turn of the century, things were beginning to look up at NZP. In ten years the collection had grown from 181 individuals to 675 in spite of all the hardships and lack of funds.

— Billie Hamlet

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Lucile Q. Mann, Editor